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Alumnus Petitions United Nations for World Adoption Day

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Cedarville University graduate Hank Fortener is petitioning the United Nations to set aside November 9 as World Adoption Day. Fortener is a pastor at MOSAIC Los Angeles, founder of AdoptTogether and recently spoke at Tedx Hong Kong and Tedx Chisinau.

As a pastor, Fortener has seen many couples who want to adopt, but cannot afford it. In 2012, he founded AdoptTogether to help families bear the financial burden. Since then, the site has raised \$6 million to support more than 1,400 families complete the adoption process.

Fortener began World Adoption Day last year as an unofficial day of support, celebration and fundraising for adoption efforts, but a motion by the United Nations would make it an official day of support and celebration around the world.

It is estimated that nearly 153 million children around the world are orphaned, according to SOS Children's Villages, a global organization that assists children in need.

"Firsthand I've seen the irreplaceable, unbelievable power of unconditional love for a child who has no home or a child who's born into that home," said Fortener. Growing up, his family fostered 36 children and grew to include eight adopted children from five foreign countries.

A 2003 graduate of Cedarville University, Fortener said his college years helped him learn to put the Gospel into action.

"Cedarville was paramount for me as I learned how to integrate the spiritual into my everyday life," said Fortener. "My time at Cedarville gave me a thirst for the Scriptures and a love for justice."

To date, AdoptTogether has sponsored adoptions from 43 different countries. The ministry has placed a child in all 50 states.

To celebrate the second annual World Adoption Day, supporters are being asked to draw a smiley face on their hand and use #worldadoptionday on social media. For more information or to donate to the cause, visit www.adopttogether.org.

"It's a day to celebrate adoption — the families that are created are changed forever," said Fortener.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,711 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 100 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings.